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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY - NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

The Sinking of *USS Indianapolis*

The *USS Indianapolis* (CA-35) was commissioned at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 15 November 1932. The ship served with honor from Pearl Harbor through the last campaign of World War II, sinking in action two weeks before the end of the war. On 30 July 1945, while sailing from Guam to Leyte, *Indianapolis* was torpedoed by Japanese submarine *I-58*. The ship capsized and sank in twelve minutes. Survivors were spotted by a patrol aircraft on 2 August. All air and surface units capable of rescue operations were dispatched to the scene at once, and the surrounding waters were thoroughly searched for survivors. Upon completion of the day and night search on 8 August, 316 men were rescued out of the crew of 1,199.

Related Resources:

- [Photographs of USS *Indianapolis*](#)
- [Photographs of Japanese submarine *I-58*](#)
- [Navy Department Press Releases concerning loss of USS *Indianapolis* and Court Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay, III, USN](#)
- [Oral History: Recollections of CAPT Lewis L. Haynes, MC, USN, Senior Medical Officer](#)
- [Oral History: Recollection of CAPT Charles B. McVay, Commanding Officer of USS *Indianapolis* \(CA-35\) which was sunk by Japanese Submarine *I-58* on 30 July 1945 near the Philippines](#)
- [Interrogation of Commander Machitusura Hashimoto, former commanding officer of Japanese submarine *I-58* regarding the sinking of USS *Indianapolis* \(CA-35\) as well as Japanese Navy tactics and technology](#)

SELECTED PUBLISHED SOURCES

Boyd, Carl. "Attacking the *Indianapolis*: A Re-examination." *Warship International* 13, no.1 (1976): 15-25.

Brown, Chip. "Terror of Shark and Sea, 35 Years After." *Washington Post* (6 Aug. 1980): E1-E3.

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Ethridge, Kenneth E. "The Agony of the *Indianapolis*." *American Heritage* 33, no.5

(Aug.-Sep. 1982): 81-96.

Haynes, Lewis L. and George W. Campbell. "We Prayed While 883 Died." *Saturday Evening Post* (6 Aug. 1955): 28-29,76,78,80.

Helm, Thomas. *Ordeal By Sea: The Tragedy of the U.S.S. Indianapolis*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963. OCLC 1349965. [Includes final sailing list with survivors indicated.]

Kurzman, Dan. *Fatal Voyage: The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis*. New-York: Atheneum, 1990. OCLC 20824775.

Lech, Raymond B. *All the Drowned Sailors*. New York: Stein and Day, 1982. OCLC 8668901.

Moore, Katherine D. *Goodbye, Indy Maru: A Navy Wife Remembers*. Knoxville TN: Lori Publications, 1991.

Mueller, Michael "Lost at Sea." *American History Illustrated* 20, no.4 (Jun. 1985): 28-35.

"Navy Reports on Court Martial and Gives Account of *Indianapolis*' Loss." *Army and Navy Journal* 83, no.27 (2 Mar. 1946): 815, 828, 831.

Newcomb, Richard F. *Abandon ship! Death of the U.S.S. Indianapolis*. New York: Holt, 1958. OCLC 173257, 2177577.

_____. "Four Nights of Terror." *American Legion* 111, no.2 (Aug. 1981): 16-17,40-41.

Norwitz, Steven. "Remembering the Hunger and Thirst, the Sharks and the Screams." *Washington Post* (5 Aug. 1975): B1-B2.

The above books and articles should be available in local libraries, or obtainable through interlibrary loan.

UNPUBLISHED ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

- Microfiche 73: WWII War Diary of *Indianapolis*. Set of 15 fiche.
- **Microfilm reel NRS 461** for IBM casualty list of 30 July 1945, for losses in Philippine Sea area. Microfilm reel.
- **Microfilm reel NRS 462** for documents on loss of *Indianapolis* on 30 July 1945. Contents of reel include:
 - Interview with Capt. Charles B. McVay III.
 - *Indianapolis* Report of loss dated 12 Aug. 1945
 - *Indianapolis* Report of circumstances of loss dated 26 Aug. 1945.
 - Western Carolines Subordinate Area Report of Search and Rescue dated 15 Aug. 1945
 - Navy Department press releases:
 - Charges and Specifications in Case of Captain Charles B. McVay, III, USN, 3 December 1945

- Narrative of the Circumstances of the Loss of USS *Indianapolis*, 23 February 1946
- Report on Court Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay, III, USN, Commanding Officer, USS *Indianapolis*, 23 February 1946
- Announcement of scheduled appearance of Commander Hashimoto at Court Martial of Captain McVay, 12 December 1945

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